



TRINITY COUNTY
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION

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July 22, 1997

CALFED Bay-Delta Program Office
1416 Ninth St., Suite 1155
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Inquiry Submittals for Category III Funding

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed are 10 copies each of two Inquiry Submittals for Category III Funding. The projects are "***Removal of Flood Hazard Obstructions to Implementation of Dam Releases Prescribed for Trinity River Fishery Restoration***" and "***Trinity River Tributaries Agricultural Water Conservation Program***". We respectfully request that you include the Trinity River basin in the geographic scope of your next Category III RFP. The Trinity River is officially a tributary of the Delta, according to Proposition 204, and should therefore be included in the Category III geographic scope.

The Trinity River has exported approximately 1 million acre-feet a year to the Central Valley Project and the Delta since project completion in 1963. The CVPIA (3406(b)(23)) requires that the Interior Secretary make a permanent decision on Trinity River fishery flows to meet the long-term Congressional goal of restoring Trinity River fisheries to levels that existed prior to construction of the Trinity River Division of the CVP. Therefore, it behooves the CALFED program to fund worthy projects which will help meet Trinity River fishery restoration goals in order to maximize the use of limited water resources for numerous beneficial uses.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at (916) 628-5949.

Sincerely,

Tom Stokely,
Senior Planner

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Category III Inquiry Submittal**a. Title: Removal of Flood Hazard Obstructions to Implementation of Dam Releases Prescribed for Trinity River Fishery Restoration**

Submitted by: Trinity County Planning Department, Natural Resources Division P. O. Box 156, Hayfork, CA 96041; Arnold Whitridge (916) 623-6688 or Tom Stokely (916) 628-5949

b. Project Description: Elevate, relocate, protect, strengthen, or purchase & demolish bridges, roads, residences, and other improvements which would be inundated or damaged by the occasional high flows necessary for effective restoration of Trinity River fisheries and natural processes. A twelve-year Fish & Wildlife Service Trinity River Flow Study and two decades of (largely mechanical) restoration effort to date demonstrate that effective, economical, and lasting restoration requires an improved flow regime which includes releases of up to 14,000 cubic feet per second from Lewiston Dam. Such releases are not legally and politically feasible until structures, parcels, and major improvements (approximately two dozen are identified in the Department of Water Resources' Trinity River Damage Assessment) are removed from danger of resulting flood damage.

The proposed project will permit the reintroduction of "natural" flow processes to remedy a variety of well documented stressors, including inadequate sediment flushing, reduced channel dynamics, loss of shallow water habitat, degradation of instream habitat, and seasonal temperature problems. This will directly benefit priority spring-run chinook salmon, late-fall run chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and green sturgeon, as well as "non-priority" coho and fall-run chinook salmon.

c. Approach/Tasks/Schedule: Project staff (already tentatively funded through federal FY98 by the Trinity River Restoration Program) will complete identification of properties subject to inundation during prescribed restoration flows, develop agreements with owners or public managers as to the preferred flood protection measures, arrange additional engineering or appraisals as necessary (most will already be completed with funding from the Trinity River Restoration Program by the time of a Category III application) and use Category III funding to subcontract construction tasks and purchase properties for transfer to a public agency. Most tasks can be completed within one year from funding approval; bridge modifications could require two to three years.

d. Justification for Project and Funding by CALFED: As discussed in section (b) above, the project is necessary to permit implementation of an effective, natural, economical Trinity River restoration program. CALFED funding is appropriate because:

1. The Trinity River is a tributary of the Bay-Delta ecosystem, recognized as such in Proposition 204, by virtue of the average 1 million acre feet of water it contributes annually to the CVP, including Delta flows. This massive diversion helps to sustain the Delta but has caused Trinity River fish populations to dwindle to approximately 20% of pre-dam levels.

2. Failure to perform the work proposed here will prevent implementation of an efficient restoration flow regime, which could jeopardize Trinity's contribution to the delta water supply. Specific restoration tasks can be accomplished with less total water if occasional high flows are available; the Secretary of the Interior is obliged by the authorizing legislation for the Trinity Division of the CVP and by trust responsibilities to the downstream Hoopa Valley and Yurok Tribes (and may be obliged in the future by Endangered Species Act, area-of-origin or other requirements) to pursue restoration; if efficient flows (8,500 cfs and up) are not available, less efficient and

more water-consumptive flows (4,000 - 6,000 cfs for longer periods) will be required, leaving less water available for CVP/Delta uses.

The Trinity River Restoration Program has funded the DWR Assessment and a project specialist to coordinate the necessary work to date, and has tentatively budgeted \$250,000 for the project in Federal FY98. Trinity County expects to fund preliminary bridge engineering work through its Restoration funded grant program. Some additional funding is possible through the Restoration Program, but authorization for the Program expires in October 1998, there are other pressing needs for Program funds, notably including completion of the Trinity River Restoration EIS/EIR, and it is certain that the Restoration Program will not be able to completely fund the work proposed here before authorization expires.

Inquiry submitter plans to apply to the Proposition 204 Delta Tributary Watershed Program and the USDA NRCS Floodplain Easement Program in addition to Category III, and is investigating other potential funding sources.

e. Budget Costs: The Department of Water Resources Trinity River Damage Assessment, which studied most but not all potentially affected properties and improvements, estimates that costs to remove hazards from flood levels caused by 14,000 cfs dam releases will total about \$2.5 million, which includes \$1.9 million to upgrade three bridges, \$0.4 million to purchase properties and demolish structures, and \$0.2 million to elevate roads. Engineering analyses, discussions with landowners, and investigations in areas not covered by the DWR study may lead to modification of this cost estimate before a formal Category III proposal.

Third-party impacts: Successful completion of the project will reduce risks of flood damage to public and private properties, and could lead to a modification of dam safety criteria which might permit increased reservoir storage. There are no known adverse third party impacts. As discussed above, failure to complete the proposed work could maximize the loss of CVP diversions from the Trinity to and through the Delta.

f. Applicant Qualifications: For eight years, Natural Resources Division staff has successfully administered a Trinity River Restoration Program regranting program, with associated contracting, accounting, reporting, and performance requirements. The Division operates with the cooperation and/or oversight of other County departments experienced in public works contracting, auditing and accounting, and contract law.

g. Monitoring and Data Evaluation: The proposed work is straightforward, and results will be immediately measurable and not subject to change. The County's Floodplain Management Ordinance prohibits new construction within the 100-year floodplain of the Trinity River, an area substantially larger than is proposed for treatment here.

h. Local Support/Coordination with Other Programs/Compatibility with CALFED Objectives: There is broad local support for restoring the fishery populations of the Trinity River. The Trinity County Board of Supervisors has recognized that effective restoration requires periodic higher river flows than have been scheduled since completion of the CVP dams, and has explicitly endorsed efforts to reduce associated flood hazards. As noted above, the project has grown from and been initially supported by the Trinity River Restoration Program, which is administered by the Bureau of Reclamation and guided by a 19-member task force.

The project is necessary to improve the health of an important "tributary" of the Bay-Delta ecosystem. It will also help reduce a potentially significant loss of water to the Delta by permitting the use of efficient Trinity River channel maintenance flows.